

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022

The President's News Conference in Bali, Indonesia
November 14, 2022

The President. Welcome to Bali. *[Laughter]* Please.

Good evening, everyone.

Let me start with a few words about the recent elections held in the United States. What we saw was the strength and resilience of the American democracy, and we saw it in action. And the American people proved once again that democracy is who we are.

And there was a strong rejection of election deniers at every level, from those seeking to lead our States and those seeking to serve in Congress and also those seeking to oversee the elections. And there was a strong rejection of political violence and voter intimidation. And there was an emphatic statement that in America, the will of the people prevails.

I have—I've traveled this week, and it's been clear just how closely the world and our allies and our competitors as well have been following our elections at home.

[At this point, the President cleared his throat.]

Excuse me, I have a little cold.

And what these elections showed is that there is a deep and unwavering commitment in America to preserving and protecting and defending democracy.

Now, let me speak briefly about our agenda over the past few days in Egypt and in Cambodia and here in Indonesia. In this moment of great global challenges—from global inflation to the climate crisis, to Russia's brutal war against Ukraine—we're bringing together the broadest possible coalition of partners to deliver results.

At COP27 in Egypt, I made it clear that thanks to the bold agenda of our administration we pursued from day one to tackle the climate crisis and advance energy and security at home and around the world, the United States will meet—the United States will meet—our emissions target under the—targets under the Paris Agreement.

And we're going to keep working with our partners to support the most vulnerable countries in building resilience to climate impacts and to align global ambition with the 1.5-degree Celsius goal, while supercharging our clean energy transition.

At the U.S.-ASEAN summit and the East Asia Summit, I laid out a commitment for—to working with our partners in the Indo-Pacific to ensure a future that's vital to this region, that's free and open and prosperous, as well as secure.

And I met with our allies from Australia, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, underscoring our commitment and deepening our engagement with our closest partners, and strengthening cooperation among our allies to meet shared threats to our own security and to their security, including the D.P.R.K.

And let me meet—I just met in person with Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China. We had——

[The President cleared his throat.]

Excuse me. We had an open and candid conversation about our intentions and our priorities. It was clear—he was clear, and I was clear—that we'll defend American interests and values,

promote universal human rights, and stand up for the international order and work in lockstep with our allies and partners.

We're going to compete vigorously. But I'm not looking for conflict; I'm looking to manage this competition responsibly. And I want to make sure that every country abides by the international rules of the road. And we discussed that.

The "one China" policy—our "one China" policy has not changed—has not changed. We oppose unilateral change in the status quo by either side, and we're committed to maintaining the peace and stability in the Taiwan Straits.

It was also clear that China and the United States should be able to work together where we can to solve global challenges that require every nation to do its part. We discussed Russia's aggression against Ukraine, reaffirmed our shared belief in the threat where the use of nuclear weapons is totally unacceptable. And I asked that Secretary Blinken travel to China to follow up on our discussions and continue keeping the lines of communication open between our two countries.

Looking ahead at the G-20 meetings tomorrow, we're going to be talking—taking on the very issues that matter to the people's lives, not only here, but also our allies and our partners. That means tackling the suffering that Russian aggression has unleashed, not just on Ukrainian people, but the people around the world, particularly food insecurity, and strengthening the fundamentals of our global economy for everyone: support for debt relief, reforms for multilateral development banks, investments to bolster global health security and to make the—sure the world is better prepared for the next pandemic.

The G-20 has been an important forum for the world's largest economies to work together for the good of people everywhere, and I'm looking forward to our meetings tomorrow.

Now, let me close with this: On my first trip overseas last year, I said that America was back—back at home, back at the table, and back to leading the world.

In the year and a half that's followed, we've shown exactly what that means. America is keeping its commitments. America is investing in our strength at home. America is working alongside our allies and partners to deliver real, meaningful progress around the world. And at this critical moment, no nation is better positioned to help build the future we want than the United States of America.

Now I'm happy to take questions. And I'm told there are going to be 4 questioners, but I'm not going to do 10 questions from each questioner—[laughter]—all right? I'll make that clear at the outset here.

And—[laughter]—so, Ken Thomas, Wall Street Journal.

China-U.S. Relations/Taiwan

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You said at the outset of this meeting that you did not want competition to turn into conflict. Based on this meeting today, do you believe a new cold war with China can be avoided?

And specifically, on the issue of Taiwan, you spoke about intentions. Do you believe China is preparing, intending to invade Taiwan at some point? And what warnings did you issue to President Xi if he were to take such action?

The President. Well, to answer the first part of your question, I absolutely believe there's—need not be a new cold war. We—I've met many times with Xi Jinping, and we were candid and

clear with one another across the board. And I do not think there's any imminent attempt on the part of China to invade Taiwan.

And I made it clear that our policy in Taiwan has not changed at all. It's the same exact position we've had. I made it clear that we want to see cross-strait issues peacefully resolved. And so it never has to come to that. And I'm convinced that he understood exactly what I was saying. I understood what he was saying.

And look, I think the United States is better prepared than any country in the world, economically and politically, to deal with the changing circumstances around the world.

And I think that—I think Xi Jinping is—we agreed that we would set up a set of circumstances where on issues that were—that we had to further resolve details, we agreed that we would have our chief of staff—our—the appropriate Cabinet members and others sit and meet with one another to discuss the details of any—every issue that we—that was raised, and we raised a lot of issues.

Seung Kim, Associated Press.

China-U.S. Relations/Impact of the 2022 Midterm Elections on U.S. Foreign Policy

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You met with President Xi, and you met with him face to face after he had unquestionably consolidated his power at home. So now that you've met with him face to face, how do you assess his sort of posture towards the United States now? And did you find him personally to be more confrontational or more conciliatory and willing to compromise?

The President. Neither. And yes.

Q. Can you elaborate?

The President. Yes, I didn't find him more confrontational or more conciliatory. I found him the way he's always been: direct and straightforward.

And do I think he's willing to compromise on various issues? Yes. I think he understands that—look, I think—how can I say this tactfully? I think the election held in the United States was—still leaves a little bit uncertain—has sent a very strong message around the world that the United States is ready to play.

The United States is—the Republicans who survived, and along with the Democrats, are of the view that we're going to stay fully engaged in the world and that we, in fact, know what we're about. And so I don't get any sense that there's more or less confrontation.

We were very blunt with one another about places where we disagreed or where we were uncertain of each other's position. And we agreed we'd set up—and we did—mechanisms whereby we would meet in detail with our—the key people in each of our administrations to discuss how we could resolve them, or how, if they weren't resolved, on what basis were they not resolved.

Sebastian Smith, the AFP.

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. President. That's truly close. *[Laughter]* Excuse me, I don't usually talk that loudly.

Ukraine/Russia

Does the retaking of Kherson in Ukraine signal a turning point in the war, in your opinion, that the Ukrainians—where the Ukrainians could realistically pursue their ultimate goal of expelling the Russians completely, including retaking Crimea? If so, does the U.S. intend to support and facilitate that goal as you've been doing so far with their other goals? Or would you

perhaps see Kherson as a different kind of inflection point, basically a good time to start negotiating now that they've got some more strength than they had, you know, a few weeks ago? Thank you.

The President. First of all, it was a significant, significant victory for Ukraine. A significant victory. And I can do nothing but applaud the courage, determination, and capacity of the Ukrainian people and Ukrainian military. I mean, they have really been amazing.

And I think it's hard to tell at this point exactly what it means in terms of—but I've been very clear that we're going to continue to provide the capability for the Ukrainian people to defend themselves. And we are not going to engage in any negotiation. There's no—nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine. This is a decision Ukraine has to make.

I think you're going to see things slow down a bit because of the winter months and the inability to move as easily around the country. But I think it remains to be seen exactly what the outcome will be, except that I'm confident that Russia will not occupy or defend Ukraine as they intended from the beginning.

Ah, okay, I'm having trouble reading this. Reuters, Natandya [Nandita; White House correction] Bose.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Oh, there you are.

China-North Korea Relations/North Korea/China-U.S. Relations

Q. A quick question on North Korea, which appears poised to conduct a new nuclear test. I'm wondering if you can talk about your specific discussions with President Xi on that.

To what extent do you think China has the ability to talk North Korea out of conducting such tests? And what are the repercussions for U.S.-Chinese relations if a test goes forward?

The President. Well, first of all, it's difficult to say that I am certain that China can control North Korea, number one.

Number two, I've made it clear to President Xi Jinping that I thought they had an obligation to attempt to make it clear to North Korea that they should not engage in long-range nuclear tests. And I made it clear as well that if they did—"they" meaning North Korea—that we would have to take certain actions that would be more defensive on our behalf, and it would not be directed against North Korea—I mean, excuse me—it would not be directed against China, but it would be to send a clear message to North Korea. We are going to defend our allies, as well as American soil and American capacity.

And so—but I do not think that—it's difficult to determine whether or not China has the capacity. I'm confident China is not looking for North Korea to engage in further escalatory means. Because I made it clear—and I made it clear from the very beginning, and last year as well, that we will do what it needs to defend our capacity, to defend ourselves and our allies—South Korea, as well as Japan—and that it would be—we'd be more up in the face of China. But it wouldn't be because of China, it'd be because of what was going on in North Korea.

So—and again, on a number of these issues, we have put together teams where our National Security Adviser, Secretary of Defense, and others are going to be engaging with their counterparts in China to see—and we're not going to be able to work everything out. I'm not suggesting it's going—this is kumbaya, you know, everybody is going away with everything in agreement. But I do not believe that there's a need for concern of a, as one of you raised the legitimate question, a new cold war.

And I think that—I'll conclude by saying it this way: I want to be clear—and be clear with all leaders, but particularly with Xi Jinping—that I mean what I say and I say what I mean, so there's no misunderstanding. That's the biggest concern is—I have is a misunderstanding about intentions or actions on each of our parts.

So we went in to—I'll look at my team—how long did that meeting last?

Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken. Three and a half hours.

The President. Three and a half hours. So we covered an awful lot of territory. And I must say that he was as straightforward as he has been with me in the past. And I think that we understand one another, which is the most important thing that can be done.

I guess all of you are going swimming from here. It's not far. *[Laughter]* But——

Abortion Rights Legislation

Q. Mr. President, what should Americans expect from Congress as it relates to abortion rights after the midterms?

The President. I don't think they can expect much of anything other than, we're going to maintain our positions.

I'm not going to get into more questions. I shouldn't even have answered your question.

Q. *[Inaudible]*—codify? You had said you would try—you would plan to codify.

Q. Mr. President, will you take——

The President. No, no, I don't think that——

Q. ——a question from an Indonesian?

The President. I don't think there's enough votes to codify, unless something happens unusual in the House. I think we're going to get very close in the House. But I don't—I think it's going to be very close, but I don't think we're going to make it.

Thank you.

Q. Mr. President——

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 10:03 p.m. at the Grand Hyatt Bali hotel. In his remarks, the President referred to U.S. National Security Adviser Jacob J. Sullivan and Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III; and Communist Party Politburo Member and Director of Foreign Affairs Commission Yang Jiechi and Minister of National Defense Wei Fenghe of China.

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